

Wednesday, July 18, 2001

Comments to the Lincoln City/Lancaster County Planning Commission Public Hearing

Members of the Planning Commission:

Good afternoon. My name is Karen Miller. My husband and I live at 141st and Pioneers where we also own and operator Miller Nursery. We are also members of Citizens for Accountable Route Selection, commonly known as CARS.

My husband, John, and other members of CARS have testified that CARS was created for the sole purpose of ensuring that the right beltway location decision was made for the right reasons. If the Far-East Route or EF-1 was the right decision for the right reasons I would not be here! After reviewing the report from the Planning Department Staff, I strongly encourage you to support their recommendation that the Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 94-63 be denied.

I bring to your attention the recommendation that was made by the paid city's consultant in their June 1997 report. This consultant recommended eliminating the Far East Beltway Route (EF-1) as a viable route based upon the following reasons:

1. All alternatives involving the EF-1 alignment were in the least economically feasible group.
2. EF-1 is the most expensive to build and would be used by fewer motorists.
3. EF-1 provides less benefits, congestion reduction and safety.
4. EF-1 requires more land to construct due to its greater length.
5. EF-1 would have the greatest adverse impact on agricultural properties by taking over 700 acres of crop lands.
6. EF-1 has the greatest adverse impact to existing school districts with the removal of 1,250 acres from the tax base.
7. EF-1 has the greatest adverse impact on existing mapped wetlands (16).
8. EF-1 has the greatest adverse impact on natural prairie sites (7).

To date, within the Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS), there is no justification, reason or fact that would dispute the consultant's recommendation to eliminate the Far East Beltway Route (EF-1). Not even LES, the NRD or the National Historic Trust would disagree.

The citizens of Lincoln and Lancaster County have paid over \$2.5 million dollars in conjunction with these studies. It is now time to follow the recommendation of the paid city's consultant and the recommendation of the Planning Department Staff to deny Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 94-63 – the EF-1 beltway route.

After all of these years, even if the EF-1 beltway route is eliminated, we have not won. We have only stayed even. There will be no winners – only losers. You must reserve within the Comprehensive Plan a beltway corridor. Every person in this room, regardless of their beltway preference, has had their future put on hold. We must be able to get on with our lives – please no further diversions. I urge approval of the Planning Department Staff's recommendation to deny No. 94-63.

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As I mentioned earlier, I would not be here today if I felt that EF-1 was the right route for the right reason. To further prove this point, my family owns land located within the South Beltway Route, but not once have you heard us say one word against this route – it is the right decision for the right reason.

In conclusion, please make the right decision for the right reason by approving the Planning Department Staff's recommendations.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my comments. If you have any questions, I would be happy to take them.

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